FREE LABOR IN BRITISH GUIANA AND BARBADOES.

[Fifth Article.]

DECLINE OF THE SLAVE POPULATION—THE APPRENTICESHIP—COMMENCEMENT OF THE FREE-LABOR SYSTEM.

Simultaneously with the union of the Guiana colonies under one Government, and the important modifications which, between the years 1826 and 1832, had been made in the legal relations of the masters and slaves, attention was called to an alarming decline both in the total number and the effective force of the slave population. The total number of slaves in Demerara and Essequibo, which, by the registration of 1817, had been 77,163, was reduced by the registration of 1832 to 65,517, and that notwithstanding the introduction between 1817 and 1824 of 4,701 slaves brought from the islands and newly registered. The total of the Berbice registration, which had stood at 24,549 in 1817, had sunk by 1831 to 20,645, showing an absolute diminution for the whole of British Guiana of twenty thousand slaves, or one-fifth of the entire slave population in fifteen years. Nor was this the worst of it. There was every prospect that, under the existing system, this diminution of the labor strength of the colony must continue to go on for years to come. Although the disproportion of males to females had considerably diminished, no increase, but, on the contrary, a marked decrease had occurred in the number of children under the age of ten years. They had stood in Demerara and Essequibo, by the first registration, at 17,226. In 1832, they numbered but 12,231, showing a diminution of nearly 5,000, and holding out but a dismal prospect as to the future supply of labor. The Demerara and Essequibo registration of 1817 had shown between the ages of ten and thirty 27,124 slaves. This class was reduced by the registration of 1832 to 22,128. The diminution in the class between thirty and forty—the very prime of life—was still more remarkable. It had sunk from 19,998 to 8,345. On the other hand, the class of those over forty showed an increase of 11,998. This change in the relative proportion of those over forty goes to explain in part the diminution in the number of children, an undue proportion of the women being now beyond the age of child-bearing. The slave population, which in 1817 had been vigorous and effective, a picked body of laborers, almost the entire number under fifty, was now growing old and decrepid, and was undergoing a constantly accelerated and diminution of numbers and a still greater one of effective force.

The Registrar in his report for 1832, after noting these facts, adds the following remarks: "For several years back West India estates have "done but little more than pay their expenses, "leaving little or no profit upon the capital in- "vested; and a diminution of future effective la- "bor so great as the colony seems doomed shortly "to experience, *will no doubt gradually render "small estates no longer worth cultivating.* The "cultivation of sugar, coffee, and cotton consti- "tutes almost the whole wealth and employ- "ment of this colony. The two latter have been "cultivated with loss for some time past, and the "slaves of many of these properties have been trans- "ferred to sugar estates *which are mostly short- "handed*, and the land abandoned."

This statement is of importance, as conclusively proving that the introduction of free labor into the colony is in no way responsible for the final extinction of the coffee and cotton cultivation, which had been long in progress, and which was predestined, even had the slave system continued. It also goes to show that the diminution of labor, of which, subsequent to the emancipation, the sugar planters so loudly complained, was not solely due to the withdrawal of the emancipated negroes from the plantations, but, in a considerable degree, also to an actual diminution in the effective laboring force of the emancipated population. In 1832, the colony still contained upward of 30,000 laborers of African birth. Nearly the whole of these, in the course of the next ten or fifteen years, either died off, or became superannuated. Nor was there any adequate proportion of young people by whom their places could be supplied. It is plain then that, if the slavery system had been left undisturbed, the colony was destined to an inevitable decline from lack of labor. Nor would it have been possible to apply the remedy made admissible by the free-labor system, of immigration from abroad—a remedy which, after much expense, mismanagement, and a dear-bought experience, seems destined ultimately to supply the sugar plantations with all the labor they may require, while, at the same time, an opening is made for a class of small farmers and freeholders employed in the raising of food for the domestic consumption of the colony.

Modifications in the slave labor system identical with those introduced into British Guiana were introduced also into the colonies of St. Lucia and Trinidad, they being, like British Guiana, conquered colonies, and as such subject to direct legislation on the part of the Crown. Similar changes were strongly urged upon Jamaica and the other original English colonies. But the local Legislatures of those colonies decidedly refused. In their case the only resort was to an act of Parliament. But in the unreformed Parliament the West India interest was very strong, and the Ministry hesitated. The obstinate resistance of the West India Legislatures to any modification of the slave system, induced the reformed Parliament to take a step which a more complying spirit might have prevented or delayed. This was the passage of an act applicable alike to all the slave colonies, to go into operation on the 1st of August, 1834, by which Slavery was abolished, and a temporary apprenticeship substituted for it. This apprenticeship was to last, in the case of slaves attached to the plantations, for six years; in the case of household servants, for four years. The position in which the apprentices were placed by this act was a considerable advance upon that to which the slaves of British Guiana had been raised by the recent legislation in their favor. The labor to be required of the adult slaves was reduced to forty-five hours in the week, which might be either seven hours and a half for six days, or nine hours for five days, thus leaving the slaves Saturday in which to cultivate their provision grounds. As in the case of domestic servants, it was not possible thus to limit the hours of labor, their apprenticeship was to be two years shorter. A fixed allowance of provisions and clothing was required. The power of inflicting punishment was taken away from the masters. They could only be inflicted by order of certain magistrates known as special justices, sent out from England to administer the apprenticeship law, and holding much the same place as the protectors of slaves already appointed in British Guiana.

The act also provided for a compensation to the owners, to be based on an appraisement, that appraisement being founded upon the prices realized in such actual sales as had occurred between the years 1822 and 1830.

The total number of slaves in British Guiana for whom compensation was claimed under this act was 82,824. Of these, 57,807 were classed as predial attached—that is, engaged in agricultural labor, attached to plantations; 5,475 as predial non-attached, constituting the task-gangs formerly spoken of; and 6,297 as non-predial, consisting for the most part of domestic servants. There were 3,352 returned as aged, diseased, or otherwise non-effective, and 9,893 as under six years of age. These last were not included in the apprenticeship, but were declared free at once. For the purpose of the appraisement the predial attached were classed as head people, 3,313; mechanics, 1,610; inferior mechanics, 618; field laborers, 39,193; inferior field laborers, 13,073. The total appraisement amounted to £9,489,557, or about $45,550,000, which gave the slaves an average value of about $550. The compensation paid amounted to about half the appraised value. This large sum—upward of twenty millions of dollars—went almost entirely into the hands of the British merchants who held mortgages on the plantations.

To carry the apprenticeship system into operation, a new Governor, Sir. James Carmichael Smith, had been sent to the colony. He proved a magistrate of great firmness and decision, and the planters soon found that it was in vain to expect from him anything but the most strict impartiality in carrying the new law into effect. One of the early results of the new system, was the general introduction of task-work. Tables were prepared by a committee of planters appointed by the Governor, showing the quantity of each discription of work which might be expected from an average hand as the result of a day's labor. These tables were based upon the experience of the slave time. But it was soon found, that the more athletic and active, under the new stimulus of securing the rest of the day for themselves, could perform the appointed task in much less time than the average of the laborers, and many of these efficient workers were induced by the offer of payment, to perform a second, or part of a second task. Mechanical improvements, which begun now to be generally introduced, saved a large amount of labor in supplying the sugar-mills with canes for grinding, and in carrying away the "megass" so called, the crushed residium of the cane, to the logies, or long and lofty sheds, roofed over, but open at the sides, in which the megass is stored to be protected from the rains, and kept in a condition to be employed as fuel for the sugar-boilers.

It thus happened that notwithstanding the curtailment in the number of hours of labor, which the planters could extort from their apprentices, and the actual diminution of the number of laborers, which, from causes already pointed out, was going on during the whole period of the apprenticeship, the sugar planters were still able to keep up and even to extend their cultivation. The crops of sugar, rum, and molasses during the four years that the apprenticeship lasted were decidedly larger than they ever had been under the slave system. The apprenticeship as administered in British Guiana combined, as we have seen, to a certain extent, the advantages of both slave and free labor. While the planters derived from the apprentices, as such, nearly or quite as much labor as they had been able to extract from them as slaves, by paying for extra work they were able to obtain an additional quantity. Nor was the curtailment in the authority of the masters so sudden or so extensive as that introduced by the apprenticeship act into most of the other colonies. The changes of the eight years preceding had gradually prepared the way. The planters, knowing that he power of the Crown might and would be exercised to remove any obstacles and to put down any opposition to the smooth working of the new system, soon accommodated themselves to it. In the other colonies, those at least which had Legislatures of their own, the case was different. Those colonies, and especially Jamaica, as they had given occasion for the Emancipation act, by their obstinate refusal to adopt any of the modifications in the slave system demanded of them, so they did their best to embarrass in every way the operation of the Apprenticeship act. The local legislation requisite to give that act effect was very grudgingly and insufficiently yielded. Nothing, indeed, but the necessity of making certain provisions for carrying that act into effect, required as a preliminary to a share in the slave compensation, extorted from those local Legislatures a hesitating and reluctant compliance. The same spirit exhibited by the local Legislatures was displayed on a large part of the plantations. Instead of gracefully yielding to what had become an inevitable necessity, the greater part of the planters still struggled to evade or set aside the provisions of the act. The apprentices, on the other hand, stickled obstinately for their new rights, and a state of contention was thus introduced, by no means favorable, as the result of the crops showed, to the interests of the planters. This they ascribed to the system itself as a necessary result. They made bitter complaints of the meddling spirit of the stipendiary magistrates, whom they accused of always taking the side of the apprentices. On the other hand, the English friends of the apprentices alleged that the stipendiary magistrates, from the very necessity of their social position, were altogether too much inclined to favor the planters. Both sides agreed that the apprenticeship worked badly; both abounded in appeals and complaints to the Home Government, till finally it was resolved, by the consent and agreement of the local Legislatures, that the apprenticeship system should terminate on the 1st of August, 1838—the period fixed for the entire emancipation of the non-predial slaves—and two years short of the time originally designated for the transformation of the agricultural apprentices into free laborers. The colony of British Guiana, urged to it by the Home Government, followed the general example in adopting this change; though, from the comparatively smooth and successful working of the apprenticeship, complaints against it were much less rife there than in most of the other colonies.

The transformation of the former slaves and late apprentices into free laborers, whose work must be hired and paid for, raised at once the serious question of the rate of wages—a question which, even in countries where the wages system has long existed, becomes occasionally a source of controversy and embarrassment. Fortunately, the system introduced during the apprenticeship of task work, and of extra labor, for which wages had been paid, afforded a basis for the arrangement of this question. The now free laborers naturally expected to be paid the same amount per task which as apprentices they had received for extra work; nor could the planters very well object to a rate of wages already sanctioned by use and the mutual consent of laborers and employers. Yet they did allege that what they had paid for extra work ought not to serve as a criterion for the ordinary value of labor.

Connected with this question of wages, arose another not so easily or satisfactorily disposed of. That was the question as to the conditions on which the now free laborers were to continue to occupy the houses and garden grounds which as slaves and apprentices they had been provided with by their masters. Upon this important subject, the Emancipation act had omitted to make any provisions. The planters at once set up a claim for rent. To that the laborers did not object; but other conditions of occupancy were coupled with it which became the occasions of great dissatisfaction, and which, in their ultimate results, have contributed more than anything else to the very thing they were intended to prevent—that withdrawal of labor from the plantations of which, as one of the consequences of the free-labor system, the planters have all along made such bitter complaints. Not content with being paid a certain money rent, the planters insisted that their tenants should be bound to labor on their plantations exclusively, and that they should labor continuously to the extent—unless prevented by sickness—of the apprenticeship rule of six tasks a week. These conditions the laborers regarded as substantially depriving them of their liberty, and binding them to the soil. The planters were not able to enforce this claim for labor to any great extent, but it produced a great uneasiness, and on the part of the most industrious and intelligent of the laborers, a strong desire to place themselves beyond this sort of control by purchasing land and building houses of their own. It was at first attempted to prevent this by refusing to sell them land. But in a colony where there were so many abandoned plantations, not to mention the abandoned fields attached to the plantations still cultivated, this policy could not long be upheld. The result has been the springing up of a large number of villages, scattered in different parts of the colony, in which a large part of the native population is collected. Only the smaller and least efficient portion of the emancipated people still live on the plantations, though houses are now offered rent-free to those who are willing to do so. These villagers, beside the houses which they occupy, are generally in possession of tracts of land which they cultivate mostly in provisions. The plantain, which still remains the favorite and staple food of the creole inhabitants, is now cultivated almost exclusively by them. When not occupied upon their own lands, they work for wages on the plantations, but their labor cannot be counted upon as regular and continuous. This collection of the people into villages is attended also by the inconvenience of removing the laborers to a great distance from the work to be performed. This distance is quite great enough for those who live on the plantations, as the cultivated fields are often two, three, and sometimes even four or five miles from the sugar works and the houses. Laborers from the villages employed upon the neighboring plantations go still greater distances, employing in this mere passing to and fro a large part of their time and strength.

Independently of this change in the locality and residence of the population, which has only been brought about gradually, and which, in the first years of the emancipation, was comparatively little felt, the termination of the apprenticeship could not but greatly enhance that disproportion between the amount of labor at the disposal of the planters, and the amount required to keep up the cultivation—a disproportion which, as we have seen, had its origin prior to the emancipation and independently of it, in the constant diminution of the effective laboring force of the population. Prior to the emancipation, the planters were able to engross, and to devote to a single object the entire laboring force of the colony, whatever it might be. The colony was one vast sugar plantation—nothing more. The introduction of the free-labor system deprived the planters of this monopoly. It at once created a great many new calls for labor in supplying the wants of the emancipated class, at the same time that it allowed a choice to labor or not, of which many availed themselves. Mothers with young children now enjoyed an opportunity of withdrawing to a certain extent from the labors of the field, while the opening of schools for the children came in direct conflict with their employment in plantation labor.

THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION OF JAPAN.

It is high time we sent the Japanese home. And we say this not solely on their own account. Though we do think that we owe them a speedy deliverance from the hospitable horrors which have beset them ever since they landed on our soil, before they are driven to the extreme remedy of their own Happy Release as the only way of their escape. We speak rather on our own behalf. Who knows into what contempt the Dred Scott decision may come through the profuse, ill-judged attentions paid to these Free Persons of Color from his Majesty the President down to the lowest depths of Common-Councildom? It is very true that the free and intelligent citizens of the neighboring hamlet of Philadelphia have done their best to impress upon their minds the force of that great rule of our jurisprudence which declares that they have no rights which a White Man is bound to respect. But, notwithstanding these honorable endeavors, the great fact remains that these persons, who, if they were traveling *incog.*, could not get into the paltriest of our taverns, and would be thrust with insult out of our omnibuses and street railway carriages, have the whole of giant hostelries—"larger than the largest size," like the giants in Tom Thumb—put at their disposal, and barouches supplied to them by the Nation for what Parson Adams (*not* South-Side) would call their "vehicular expeditation."

If these things are to be tolerated, to what end have the most venerable sages of our law uttered forth, from the oracular hight of the Bench of our Supreme Judicature, their authentic responses as to the complexion of the liberty our fathers meant to establish? It is in vain to try and set up a distinction between the cuticular pigments by which Nature hath discriminated the African from the Mongolian. The distinction is one without a difference. The latter is no more a White Man than the former, and it is an outrage on our most cherished institutions to make a difference between the original lack of rights of the two, and to deny us our inbred prerogative of treating the one as well as the other as suits our convenience and our profit. The instinct of Baltimore and of Philadelphia, which expressed itself in actions in the former city, and found utterance in *words* as well in the latter, was infallible in its promptings, and exactly represented the sentiments of the great heart of the nation. It was that instinct which our reverend Judges obeyed when they breathed it as the breath of its life into the latest of the great canons of our jurisprudence. In Baltimore, they were treated like "*niggers*," and they were boldly saluted as "*niggers*" in the streets of Brotherly Love. The Sober Second Thought of the People has settled the matter. The Old Public Functionary is sent away rebuked from the bar of that only tribunal to which he holds himself responsible.

But this is not all, nor the worst. This visit has occasioned inquiries into the institutions of Japan, and given rise to commentaries upon them which may be of the most evil consequence. So true is it that one error opens the way to a flood-tide of worse ones. It bids fair to corrupt at its sources that public virtue whose waters are for the healing of the nation. For example, we have just read with conflicting emotions of horror and alarm an article in *The Boston Post* on the Empire of Japan. Now, if we had been asked to name a manufactory of Democratic opinions on which full reliance could be put for the quality of the goods it turns out, there are few to which we should have given precedence of *The Post*. Standing in the midst of a stiff-necked and hard-hearted generation, not dependent upon the shifting streams of local public sentiment for its motive power, but propelled by the profluent flow of the perennial well of the National Treasury, we had faith that it could never turn out a bad article. But just look at this: Speaking of *caste* in Japan, the writer says: "It "is a difficult thing for an American mind, familiar "with instances of those who have, by their honor- "able labors of mind and body, risen from the "humblest to the highest rank in our Republic, to "realize the idea of those Japanese artisans and "laborers, consigned by so inhuman and unholy an "institution to the one narrow, hopeless path pre- "pared for their father's steps." Did the writer of this burst of malignant philanthropy remember what is at once the Corner-stone of our Republican Institutions, and the Black Marble Keystone of the arch of our Glorious Union? He must take care or this loose kind of talk may bring these architectural blessings thundering about our ears.

Then again he goes on: "If the intercourse and "influence of our country and Government with "the Empire of Japan continues (as there is every "reason to expect) to extend, assuredly one of its "first and most worthy objects must be the stimu- "lating of the Japanese to the abolition of this "wretched and demoralizing system." One would think that it was some ill-conditioned and mouth-foaming Abolitionist who was thus characterizing the paternal and patriarchal system which ennobles and strengthens our Model Republic. Does this writer mean to say that a system is wretched and demoralizing which fixes the condition of the tillers of the soil and the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and peremptorily forbids them ever to rise above it—they or their children? Does he presume to brand as inhuman and unholy an institution which limits the career of the artisans and laborers to the one narrow, hopeless path prepared by their father's steps? The ark of our covenant is not to be touched by unhallowed hands in this fashion. Our holy things are not to be profaned with the polluting breath of such blasphemy as this. We advise the editor of *The Post* to be careful how he permits any repetition of this disguised satire on our own most cherished institutions. He should sift his corps of contributors, and separate carefully the precious from the vile, allowing no such pernicious heresy as this to be preached from his editorial pulpit. If he do not, he had better take care how he shakes his official head or he may find it tumbling off his official shoulders—long and intimate as the connection has been between them, if we rightly recollect ourselves. So far from the intercourse of our Government tending to destroy this beneficent system, the natural effect of our example and our doctrines would be to strengthen and perpetuate it. And this common tie may well obviate the objection the Japanese entertain to the introduction of Christianity. When they find how potent an auxiliary the American Church is of our American system of Caste, they must rather hail than deprecate the extension of its beneficent influences to themselves.

Why, what could *The Post* say should the Japanese Tycoon propose, as one main object of establishing diplomatic relations with us, that it might lead to "the abolition of the wretched and demor- "alizing system" of Negro Slavery? We imagine his Embassadors would find the Court of his Majesty the Tycoon Buchanan altogether too hot to hold them. The line of policy to be pursued is very obvious, and the very opposite of this senseless suggestion. Instead of any interference with the Peculiar Domestic Institutions of Japan, they should be made to see and admire the identity of ours with theirs. Or, rather, the superiority of ours over theirs—for we believe that the Caste of Labor there merely confines the laborers and their descendants to certain kinds of work, but does not make them the property of their employers. As the Japanese are a very intelligent and imitative people, it might not be difficult to show them how largely they could increase their property by the simple process of making all their laborers their chattels personal. And, as there exists a remarkable freedom from prejudice in our country as to the previous *status* or country of the laborers we want, it is very likely a brisk trade might spring up in this article of commerce, equally profitable to both countries. The A. B. C. F. M. should at once send out missionaries instructed not to interfere with the institution of Caste, but to make use of it as a means of introducing the Gospel. The American Tract Society should lose no time in arranging its publications in such a manner as to give no ground of offense to the governing Japanese by anything reflecting on their relations to their laborers. Perhaps the Reverend President Lord might be prevailed upon to prove Socratically that the system of Caste is exactly the sort of thing Jesus Christ came to establish. And if the Reverend Dr. Southside Adams could be induced to pay a visit to Japan, and show us, from his own observation, as well as from Scripture and the nature of things, how admirable an institution Caste really is, and how much it has been abused by its maligners, the results could not fail to be of the happiest description. We could hardly expect, indeed, that the Japanese should make us as well-mannered and polished a nation as they are; but we might reasonably hope, with the Divine blessing, to make them as good Christians as ourselves. But, in the mean time, and until a stop can be put to such disgusting, not to say treasonable, twaddle as that we have just reprehended, we think that the sooner the Japanese princes and their train are reshipped for Nagasaki the better.

THE JAPANESE.

From The New American Cyclopædia.

APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER.

The Japanese are of middling size, and generally of a yellow color, though some are brown and others nearly white. Their eyes are small, oblong, and deeply sunk in the head. Their noses are short and thick, and their hair thick, black, and glossy. The people of rank have generally fair complexions, and the ladies who are not exposed to the sun have sometimes perfectly white skins and blooming cheeks. The men are vigorous and active, and the women well formed and graceful, while both sexes exhibit a higher degree of intelligence than is common among Asiatic nations. In character they are lively and volatile, quick of apprehension, daring, adventurous, frank, liberal, and hospitable. They are peculiarly fond of military life, and make excellent soldiers and sailors. They learn rapidly, and show great eagerness and much aptitude for the acquisition of the highest branches of European knowledge.

Though industrious, they are eminently a social and pleasure-seeking people, are fond of feasts and frolic, and have frequent national holidays. Music, dancing, and the theater are favorite amusements with all classes.

JAPANESE JUGGLERS.

Mummers, mountebanks, tumblers, conjurers, and all manner of jugglers are seen in the streets of the cities, and are highly popular with the people. Their jugglers surpass those of all other countries. Among other wonderful feats, that which has especially astonished their European and American visitors is the formation from pieces of tissue paper of artificial butterflies which, guided by the motions of a fan, fly about, advance, retreat, appear to sip the honey from flowers, and display all the airs and graces of real butterflies.

JAPANESE EDUCATION.

Education is almost universal, the poorest and lowest laborers being taught to read and write. The women are educated with nearly as much care as the men. The young ladies of the upper classes spend much of their time in the fabrication of pretty boxes, artificial flowers, pocketbooks, and purses, and in the painting of fans and pictures of birds and animals. In fine weather they join with the men in all sorts of out-door and rural amusements, taking especial delight in fishing on the lakes and rivers, in vessels elegantly fitted up and adorned. A highly intelligent and accomplished Englishman, James Drummond, who resided several years in Japan, about the beginning of this century, says: "The Japanese are the most fascinating, elegant ladies that I ever saw in any country in the world. Take away a few peculiarities, to which one soon gets accustomed by living among them, and they would at their first debut be admired at St. James's, or in any other court of Europe."

The Japanese gentleman is invariably described as a person of pleasing address and most polished manners. Even the commonest people are neat in their persons, and scrupulously observant of the forms of politeness. The rules that govern social intercourse are formed into a regular system, and published in books, which are diligently studied at school. Tea is a universal beverage, and smoking is general among the men. In a morning call pipes and tea are served to the guests as regularly as pipes and coffee are among the Turks. At the conclusion of the visit sweetmeats are handed to the visitor on a sheet of white paper ornamented with tinsel; these are eaten with chop-sticks, and if the guest does not eat the whole, he or she is expected to fold up the remainder in the paper and carry it away. At grand dinners each guest is expected to take with him a servant or two to carry off in baskets the remnants of the banquet. Fish is a general article of diet, and is varied with game, venison, poultry, and all sorts of vegetables, including a kind of sea-weed. Food is eaten out of light lacquered bowls and dishes made of papier maché. Feasts are followed by music and dancing, and are commonly closed by drinking tea, and a spirit called *sackee*. It is the custom on the completion of a new dwelling-house to give a house-warming, for which purpose the neighbors and friends of the master of the new house send him liberal presents of eatables and drinkables.

THEIR DRESS.

The ordinary dress of both sexes and of all ranks is very similar in form, differing chiefly in the colors, fineness, and value of the materials, those of the higher orders being generally of silk, and of the lower orders of linen or calico. The dress consists of a number of loose, wide gowns worn over each other, with the family coat of arms woven or worked into the back and breast of the outer garment, and all fastened at the waist by a girdle. The sleeves are very long and wide, and the part of the sleeve that hangs below the arm is made to serve as a pocket. The women usually wear brighter colors than the men, and border their robes with gay embroidery or gold. Upon ocasions of full dress a cloak is worn, together with a sort of trousers called *hakkama*. Within doors socks are the only covering of the feet. Shoes are worn abroad, of an awkward and inconvenient kind, consisting of soles of straw matting or of wood, which, on entering a house, are always taken off. Neither men nor women wear any covering on their heads, except occasionally as a protection from rain. They screen their faces from the sun by the fan, which is carried by all classes, by ladies, priests, soldiers, and beggars. The greatest peculiarity of Japanese costume, however, is the sword, the wearing of which is a mark of rank; it is strictly prohibited to the lower orders. The middling classes carry one, and the higher ranks two swords, which are worn on the same side, one above another.

THEIR HOUSES.

The houses of the Japanese are low, and built of wood. The walls are coated with a cement that gives them the appearance of stone. In the windows the place of glass is supplied by very fine strong paper, which is protected from rain by external wooden shutters. Verandas encircle the houses, and to almost every dwelling, even in the cities, there is attached a garden. Storerooms or warehouses, made fire-proof by copper shutters and a thick coating of clay, are numerous in the cities, in which tradesmen keep their stock of goods, and private families their valuable effects—as pictures, books, &c. Fires are frequent, and from the combustible nature of the common buildings are often terribly destructive. Conflagrations consuming thousands of houses sometimes occur.

MARRIAGE.

Polygamy is not permitted, but the power of divorce on the part of the husband is limited only by the requisition that he shall provide in a suitable manner for the support of the repudiated wife; though, in case she is divorced by barrenness, or for other reasons recognized by the tribunals as sufficient, she has no claim upon the husband for maintenance. Under no circumstances whatever can a wife demand to be separated from her husband. Concubinage and prostitution are permitted by law, and are not deemed particularly disreputable. The courtesans are destined to their trade from infancy, and, being generally well educated and accomplished, are often selected as wives by respectable men. The most singular custom among the women is that of blackening their teeth, and shaving or pulling out their eyebrows when they are married. Married women also tie their girdles before, and single women behind.

JAPANESE BATHS.

The Japanese of all classes are remarkably cleanly in their houses and persons. They bathe frequently, and there are many public bath houses in the towns open to all comers for a fee generally equal to the eighth of a cent, where both sexes bathe together entirely nude, without, apparently, the slightest idea of impropriety. In warm weather persons of both sexes may be seen in the primitive condition, bathing themselves in large tubs before the doors of their houses.

THEIR PROPENSITY TO SUICIDE.

Suicide is very common, and is generally committed by cutting open the bowels by two gashes in the shape of a cross. It is tolerated, if not in some cases approved, by the laws. The criminal who thus anticipates execution secures the public sympathy and applause, saving his property from confiscation, and his family from disgrace. Upon the death of superiors or masters, suicide is often committed as a mark of personal devotion and attachment. It is also common as a means of escaping disgrace or revenging an affront, where there appears to be no other resort. Titsingh, in his "Illustrations of Japan," says that all military men, servants of the Emperor, and persons holding civil offices under the Government, are bound, when they have committed any crime, to rip themselves up, though not till they have received an order from the court to that effect; for if they were to anticipate this order, their heirs would run the risk of being deprived of their places and property. No disgrace attaches to such a death, and the son succeeds to the father's place. "This practice is so common," says Titsingh, "that scarcely any notice is taken of such an event. The sons of all persons of quality exercise themselves in their youth, for five or six years, with a view that they may perform the operation, in case of need, with neefulness and dexterity; and they take as much aims to acquire this accomplishment as youth among s to become elegant dancers or skillful horsemen; l ence the profound contempt of death which they imbibe n their earliest years. This disregard of death, which hey prefer to the slightest disgrace, extends to the very lowest classes among the Japanese." It is related, in illustration of this propensity to resort to suicide, hat two high officers of the court met on the palace tairs and jostled each other. One was an irascible man, and immediately demanded satisfaction. The other, of a placable disposition, represented that the circumstance was accidental, and tendered an ample apology, remarking that no other satisfaction could reasonably be demanded. The irascible man, however, would not be appeased; and finding that he could not provoke the other to a conflict, he suddenly drew up his robes, unsheathed his sword, and cut himself open in the prescribed mode. As a point of honor his adversary was under the necessity of following the example. Recent accounts state that the now fashionable mode of *kurri kurri*, or "happy dispatch," as this practice of suicide is called, substitutes decapitation by the sword of a relative for the old method of ripping up.

THEIR CHARACTER.

A recent English writer (Rundall), in his "Memorials of Japan," thus sums up the character of the Japanese: "They carry notions of honor to the verge of fanaticism; and they are haughty, vindictive, and licentious. On the other hand brawlers, braggarts, and backbiters are held in the most supreme contempt. The slightest infraction of truth is punished with severity; they are open-hearted, hospitable, and, as friends, faithful to death. It is represented that there is no peril a Japanese will not encounter to serve a friend; that no torture will compel him to betray a trust; and that even the stranger who seeks aid will be protected to the last drop of his blood." St. Francis Xavier, after a long missionary experience of the Japanese, declared that in virtue and probity they surpass all the nations he had ever seen, and the latest and most competent European and American observers bestow almost equally high praise upon the national character.

THEIR AGRICULTURE.

The agriculture of the Japanese is conducted with diligence and skill. With the exception of the roads, and of the woods required to supply timber and charcoal, hardly a foot of ground to the very tops of the mountains is left uncultivated. Irrigation is judiciously applied, and manure of all kinds is carefully collected, and used in the production of generally abundant harvests. The grain principally raised is rice, which is said to be of a very superior quality. Next to rice, the tea-plant is the great object of cultivation. A coarse sugar is obtained from the sap of a tree. The gardeners of Japan have attained the art of dwarfing and also of unnaturally enlarging all vegetable productions. They exhibit in the miniature gardens of the owns full-grown trees of various kinds only three feet high, with the heads of about the same diameter. A box was shown; in 1826, to the President of the Dutch factory at Nagasaki, 4 inches long, 1¼ wide, and 6 high, in which were growing a bamboo, a fir, and a plum-tree, the latter in full blossom. The price asked for this portable grove was about $500. The growth of trees is sometimes so stimulated that the branches stretch to a great distance from the trunk, and are supported on props.

MANUFACTURES.

The Japanese work admirably well in iron, silver, gold, and all metals. Manufactures are carried on in every part of the country, and some of them are brought to such a degree of perfection as to surpass those of any other part of the world. Their lacquering in wood excels that of all other nations. They work with great skill in *sowas*, a mixture of gold and copper, which they color blue or black in a manner unknown elsewhere. Their silk and cotton goods are well made, and they understand the art of making glass in all its branches. Their steel swords are unapproachable in quality, and they make excellent mirrors of steel. Paper is made from the bark of the mulberry tree in great abundance, and of remarkable strength; it is used not only for writing and printing, and for wrapping goods, but for handkerchiefs and napkins. They are skillful in carving and die-sinking, and in the casting of metal statues, which are extensively used for idols. Their iron works, tobacco factories, breweries, distilleries, and other manufacturing establishments, are frequently on a large scale, employing hundreds of workmen. The cities of Miako, Yeddo, and Osaka are the great seats of manufactures. At Miako are made damasks, satins, taffetas, and other silk fabrics of every kind, lacquered articles, caps, scarfs, screens, fans, pins, bow-strings, paints, tea-boxes, grindstones, and porcelain, and earthenware; at Osaka, cotton goods and iron-ware; and at Yeddo nearly every species of manufacture is carried on. The people show the greatest eagerness and aptitude for imitating all kinds of European manufactures, and they are already well supplied with microscopes, telescopes, clocks, watches, knives, spoons, &c., of native make from European models, and sold at a very cheap rate. Iron and brass cannon in the European style are made, and the bomb-shells with the latest improvements. Colt's revolvers and Sharp's rifles are also made by native workmen, and at Nagasaki works have been established for the production of steam-engines without European assistance, and a screw-steamer built, which has been successfully navigated from Nagasaki to Yeddo in nine days, entirely by native seamen and engineers.

INLAND TRADE.

The internal trade of Japan is carried on with great activity. The roads are good and kept in excellent order, and stables, taverns, and warehouses, are abundant for the accommodation of merchants and other travelers. Commercial operations are conducted with promptness and regularity, and sometimes on a most extensive scale. The President of the Dutch factory in Japan, who visited Yeddo in 1806, says in his narrative of the visit: "There is a silk mercer here named Itsigoya, who has shops in all the great towns throughout the empire. If you buy anything of him here and take it away to another town, say to Nagasaki, and no longer like it, you may return it, if undamaged, to his shop there, and receive back the whole sum paid for it at Yeddo. The wealth of this man is astonishing. During my stay at Yeddo, there occurred a tremendous fire, that laid everything, our residence included, in ashes over an area of about 3 leagues by 1½. Itsigoya lost on this occasion, beside his shop, a warehouse containing upward of 100,000 pounds weight of spun silk, which fell altogether upon himself, the Japanese knowing nothing of insurances. Notwithstanding this, he sent 40 of his servants to our assistance during the fire, who were of great use to us. The second day after the conflagration he was already rebuilding his premises, paying every carpenter at the rate of about ten shillings English a day." Goods are conveyed by land on pack horses and oxen. But the principal carriage of merchandise is by water, for though the peculiar construction of the Japanese vessels unfits them for long sea voyages, they are well enough adapted to the navigation of lakes and rivers, and for coasting from port to port, and crossing from island to island. The shores of the Japanese group afford great facilities for a coasting trade, from the abundance of harbors and of shelter for vessels of small size; and these facilities are energetically used by the people of the coasts, who keep afloat a vast number of vessels, from fishing boats to junks of 300 tuns burden. Commerce is free from any impediments by tolls or duties, and the inland trade is promoted by great fairs, which, from time to time, are held at the city of Miako.

FOREIGN COMMERCE.

Until a very recent date the foreign commerce of Japan, for more than two centuries past, was limited to the Chinese and the Dutch. The Chinese trade is confined to Nagasaki, where a few junks arrive annually from the ports of Amoy, Ningpo, and Shanghae. The Dutch were allowed to visit only the port of Nagasaki, where they had a factory on a small island called Desima, in which twelve or thirteen merchants lived, closely watched by the Japanese, and allowed very little liberty. Two ships were annually sent from Batavia. Their cargoes consisted chiefly of sugar, ivory, tin, lead, bar-iron, fine chintzes, broadcloths, shalloons, silks, cloves, tortoise-shell, drugs, spectacles, looking-glasses, watches, and various herbs and roots to which the Japanese ascribe medical virtues. The chief articles of export were coffee, camphor, lacquered goods, porcelain and rice. In 1846, the imports of the Dutch into Japan amounted to only $92,446, and the exports to $220,927. In 1852, however, American diplomacy succeeded in removing the restrictions which had for centuries hampered the foreign intercourse with Japan, and many ports of the Empire have since been opened to external commerce. The articles most in use among the Japanese are tissues of all kinds, cotton prints, calicoes, flannels, camlets, small patterned chintz, velvets, woolen cloth, blankets, red shawls, glassware, mirrors, drugs, ivory, muskets, and cheap clocks and watches. The most profitable exports thus far are provisions, which find a market in China, silk, camphor, vegetable oil and wax, lacquered ware and copper.

JAPANESE MONEY.

The chief obstacle to profitable trade since the opening of the ports has proved to be the peculiar ideas of the Japanese Government on the subject of the currency. The money of Japan consists of a great variety of gold, silver, and copper coins. The largest gold coin is the obang, which is 6 inches in length, and 3½ in breadth, and is worth about $100. It is not in common use. The largest gold coin in ordinary circulation is the cobang, which is 2½ inches in length, and 1½ in breadth. It is worth about $7 50. A still more common coin is the itzibue, which when of gold is worth intrinsically about $1 75. The silver itzibue is the common silver coin, and is worth about 20 cents. A new coin has been recently issued, called a nichou, which is worth about half a dollar. But foreign coins have not been allowed to circulate among the people at all, and foreigners have been compelled to exchange their own money for Japanese coins, at a valuation which has rendered it very difficult to carry on a profitable trade. Arrangements, however, have been recently made, which it is supposed will remedy these difficulties.

SCIENCE AND ART.

In science, the Japanese have particularly cultivated medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. Superstitious prejudices have prevented them from studying anatomy by dissection, and they, therefore, have little skill in surgery; but, as physicians, they succeed better, and are able to cope with the most difficult and dangerous diseases. The medical men who have visited Japan under the auspices of the Dutch speak favorably of the skill of the native physicians, and of late years the study of European books has led to a rapid improvement in the healing art. Among their inventions are acupuncture and moxa burning, both of which, though now superseded by other processes, were long practiced in Europe, into which they had been introduced from Japan. Their most remarkable medical discovery, however, is that of a powder called *dosia*, which is reputed to possess great and beneficial power in childbearing, for diseases of the eyes, and other maladies. Taken in perfect health, it cheers the spirits and re-